

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program  
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,  
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

**County:** PLACER

**Applicant:** PLACER LAND TRUST

**Project Title:** CANYON VIEW WATERSHED AND HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECT

**Reference Number:** SNC 070222

**PROJECT SCOPE**

Canyon View Preserve is a 50-acre open space preserve owned by the Placer Land Trust. The property adjoins the Auburn State Recreation Area in the American River Canyon and contains three small ephemeral drainages that converge into Sierra Canyon Creek. Various activities both within and adjacent to the preserve, such as illegal off-road vehicle use, proliferation of invasive non-native species, and increased and concentrated run-off, have degraded wildlife habitat on the preserve and destabilized the three drainages. Using innovative techniques, this watershed and habitat restoration project will:

- Restore five acres of riparian and stream habitat along Sierra Canyon Creek;
- Restore 15 acres of open grassland;
- Reduce wildfire fuel load in the understory of 30 acres of mixed oak woodlands;
- Apply and demonstrate adaptive management principles and serve as a model for other organizations.

Steps critical to a successful project include:

- Construction of a series of step-pool and riffle-pool features to accommodate and dissipate high-flows in the ephemeral and perennial streams;
- Removal of Himalayan Blackberry and other exotic invasive plants from approximately one linear mile of riparian stream corridor;
- Re-establishment of native riparian plant communities to stabilize eroding stream banks and decrease sediment loading into the creek;
- Reduction of the understory fuel load across 30 acres of mixed oak and pine woodlands by removing woody debris and undergrowth and by removing and managing Scotch broom;
- Employment of a targeted and appropriately-timed grazing regime and utilization of goat and sheep grazing to control invasive yellow star thistle on 15 acres of open grassland.

**PROJECT SCHEDULE**

<b>DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
Stream stabilization and enhancement technical analysis	June - August 2008
Stream stabilization and enhancement project design, begin invasive plant removal and fuel load reduction, and install interpretive signs and protective fencing	August – December 2008
Begin installing protective plant cages	March 2009
Complete stream stabilization and enhancement construction	September 2009
Complete stream revegetation	October – December 2009
Complete fuel load reduction and installation of protective plant cages	March 2010
<b>Final Report/Final Payment Request</b>	<b>April 1, 2010</b>

## PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Fuel load reduction	\$20,000
Restoration work: native grassland, riparian, wetland and stream structure, invasive species removal and stream –side native planting	\$85,550
Habitat protection fencing and interpretive signage	\$35,000
Structural stream restoration and sediment removal	\$130,000
Project management and direct administrative expenses	\$28,000
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$298,550</b>

### Letters of Support:

- California Department of Parks and Recreation – Auburn State Recreation Area
- Placer County Community Development Resource Agency – Planning Department
- California Conservation Corps
- Placer County Visitors Council
- City of Auburn
- California Oak Foundation
- Placer Nature Center
- Auburn Recreation Area Canyon Keepers
- Randy Tooker - Boys and Girls Club and Protect American River Canyons
- Kathryn M. Higley – Neighboring Property Owner

### Recommendation:

Staff recommends funding this project at the requested amount of \$298,550.

## **1. Project Name: Canyon View Watershed & Habitat Restoration Project**

### **2. Project Summary**

Placer Land Trust's Canyon View Preserve Watershed & Habitat Restoration Project ("Project") will result in the following outcomes:

- (1) **Restore** 5 acres of riparian and stream habitat along Sierra Canyon Creek, which flows directly into the North Fork of the American River,
- (2) **Reduce** wildfire fuel load in the understory of 30 acres of mixed oak woodlands, and
- (3) **Restore** 15 acres of open grassland by removing and managing invasive species and stopping illegal off-road vehicle use.

Canyon View Preserve ("Preserve") is a 50-acre open space preserve owned by Placer Land Trust that adjoins Auburn State Recreation Area in the American River Canyon along its eastern boundary. It is located north of the City of Auburn, along Lincoln Way at the Bowman Exit off Interstate 80. Accessible from the Bowman Park and Ride, the site offers incredible views of both the Sierra Crest and the American River Canyon. The subbasin described in this proposal consists of three small ephemeral drainages that converge on the property into the fourth primary stream channel, Sierra Canyon Creek. Fed by continuous overflow from the Boardman Canal, this stream flows year round and directly into the North Fork of the American River. At present, illegal off-road vehicle use and the proliferation of invasive non-native species across the Preserve has damaged and continues to degrade wildlife habitat. Together the invasion of Himalayan blackberry, which has almost completely replaced the native riparian communities and the irregular flow from Boardman Canal has destabilized Sierra Canyon Creek, creating erosion problems and contributing to poor water quality downstream. While, the streams are choked with invasive Himalayan Blackberry, the grasslands are plagued with yellow starthistle and Scotch broom has invaded the oak woodland. The reduction of understory fuels will help to reduce the risk of wildfire within the urban and suburban Sierra foothills landscape.

Together, the three major elements of the Project will improve water quality by reducing sediment load into the North Fork American River, restore the natural habitat of the Sierra Canyon Creek drainage, and reduce fire danger. Using innovative restoration techniques, this watershed and habitat restoration project can serve as a model of sustainable and adaptive habitat improvement and management in the Sierra foothills and will assist in meeting important local, State and Federal goals. Placer County's Open Space and Agricultural Land Conservation Program (Placer Legacy), the Placer County General Plan, the American River Watershed Group, CALFED and others have long recognized the importance of the North Fork American River watershed to the region.

The North Fork American River watershed is bordered by the crest of the Sierra Nevada to the east; the Yuba and Bear River watersheds to the North; the Middle and South Fork American River watersheds to the south; and Folsom Lake and the Sacramento San Joaquin Delta to the west. Considerable State and Federal funding has been spent to meet CALFED restoration strategic goals and objectives that were created to ensure all tributaries within this important drainage are protected and restored by taking steps to avoid increased turbidity and sediment transport downstream, which has the potential to harm endangered fish populations and diminish water quality. The North Fork American River watershed serves as a major source of drinking water. As such, the State Water Resources Control Board has adopted a basin plan to protect drinking water along with its other water-related uses including groundwater recharge, recreation, agriculture, fish and wildlife.

